DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 464 433 EC 308 934

TITLE	National TEEM Outreach: Successfully Including Young Children in Kindergarten and Subsequent General Education Classrooms. Final Report, October 1, 1998-Septemper 30, 2001.
INSTITUTION	Vermont Univ., Burlington. Center on Disability and Community Inclusion.
SPONS AGENCY	Special Education Programs (ED/OSERS), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	2001-09-30
NOTE	29p.; Part of the Outreach Projects for Children with Disabilities program.
CONTRACT	H324R980097
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Disabilities; Early Childhood Education; *Inclusive Schools; Information Dissemination; Kindergarten; Mainstreaming; Outreach Programs; Primary Education; Program Development; Program Evaluation; *Teaching Models; Teamwork; *Transitional Programs

ABSTRACT

This final report describes activities and accomplishments of National TEEM Outreach, a 3-year project designed to support the inclusion of young children with disabilities in kindergarten and subsequent general education classrooms in 12 school districts located in 5 states. The project focused on disseminating and replicating the previously validated TEEM transition model, which stresses collaborative team planning, setting transition goals and outcomes, actively involving family members, improving staff communication, and focusing on children's strengths and needs rather than on system requirements. Major project accomplishments are described for each of four main objectives: (1) establishment of a National Advisory Council; (2) development of and conducting 9 Transition Leadership Institutes, each lasting 2 days, for 40 planning teams composed of 236 members and provision of on-going technical assistance to participating sites; (3) dissemination of project components (an Internet Web site, brochures, the project's manual, articles, and presentations); and (4) evaluation of project impact. Also briefly addressed are logistical challenges experienced by the project and ongoing future activities. (DB)

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OUTREACH PROJECTS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES
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National TEEM Outreach: Successfully Including Young Children in Kindergarten and Subsequent General Education Classrooms

FINAL REPORT

October 1, 1998 – September 30, 2001

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

National TEEM Outreach: Successfully Including Children in Kindergarten and Subsequent General Education Classrooms

An Outreach Project for Children with Disabilities

National TEEM Outreach was designed to support the inclusion of young children with disabilities in their local kindergarten and subsequent general education classrooms by disseminating and replicating a previously validated transition model entitled Project TEEM. The TEEM model promotes systematic transition planning from early childhood programs to kindergarten and beyond for individual children and their families. During the three years of the project (October 1998 to September 2001), National TEEM Outreach provided training and technical assistance to over 230 family members, early childhood and elementary general and special educators, and administrators to assist them in including 41 children with disabilities in general education classrooms across 12 participating sites nationwide. The impact of the training and follow-up technical assistance, however, enabled participants to plan for an additional 300 children who were in the early childhood settings during the project period and would benefit from the planning process following the sites' participation in the training activities.

Major project activities included establishing a national Advisory Council, conducting Transition Leadership Institutes in participating sites and providing on-site technical assistance, disseminating the components of the project nationwide, and evaluating the impact of the project. Project staff included four on-site consultants who collaborated

with Vermont project staff to provide training and technical assistance to participating sites.

I. PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of this outreach project was to use the TEEM transition planning model to assist early childhood and elementary general and special educators, family members and administrators to include at least 150 children with disabilities in the kindergarten classrooms of their public schools across fifteen participating sites nationwide by the end of this project. Specific project objectives to accomplish this goal included:

1. Establishing a national Advisory Council that included family members, early childhood and elementary general and special educators and administrators, SEA personnel, and nationally recognized experts who are actively involved in promoting inclusive education.
2. Annually conducting a two-day Institute and providing on-site follow-up technical assistance to prepare and support early childhood and elementary general and special educators, family members and administrators to transition young children with disabilities to the public school and successfully include them in kindergarten and subsequent primary grades.
3. Disseminating the components of the project in collaboration with parent organizations, Part B 619 coordinators and local and State educational agencies in participating sites' states and nationwide to increase the awareness of families and educators

about the TEEM transition planning process and the impact of project activities in promoting systematic transition planning and inclusion.

4. Evaluating each component of the project to assess the impact on young children with disabilities, their families, their educators, and their school as a whole.

II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Inherent in the TEEM model planning process are practices which have been identified as critical to effective transition and educational planning, such as establishing a collaborative team approach, setting transition goals and outcomes, actively involving family members in the transition process, improving communication among relevant staff, and focusing on children's strengths and needs rather than on system requirements in promoting success for all children. Through the TEEM collaborative planning process, diverse individuals, including the child's family, contribute their unique expertise and engage in shared decision-making and ownership for the education of all students.

The **TEEM Model** was initially developed and field-tested in Vermont to facilitate the inclusion of young children with severe disabilities into Vermont's kindergartens of their local public schools (Fox, Conn-Powers & Ross-Allen, 1988). All 62 children receiving ECSE services in the model sites, including those with severe/profound disabilities, made successful transitions into the kindergarten of their local elementary schools full-time. During a **Statewide Outreach** project based upon the TEEM model, over 300 children with disabilities in the

participating sites made successful transitions to the kindergarten classrooms in their local schools.

More than 85% of all children and youth with disabilities in Vermont, including those with severe disabilities, i.e., severe cognitive, physical and sensory disabilities (deaf, blind and deaf-blind), are educated in general education settings in their local public schools. The transition process that was disseminated through Project TEEM Outreach has been incorporated into early childhood programs throughout Vermont providing ECSE services for preschool-age children with disabilities and has formed the basis for other transition planning in the public schools, e.g., grade-to-grade, primary-to-intermediate, etc. Based on the model's successful implementation in Vermont, two national outreach projects were funded (1992-1995 and 1995-1998). Based on data collected from participants in these two National TEEM Outreach projects, the TEEM model contributed significantly to schools' attempts to more effectively address some of the barriers and challenges (e.g., attitudes around inclusion, curriculum incompatibility from one setting to another, lack of resources) to including young children with disabilities in their local schools. The experiences and data collected during these four projects informed this project's approach.

III. THE MODEL

A. TEEM Model

The **TEEM** model planning process does not prescribe a single, standard model for transition planning and decision-making. Rather, it provides families and early childhood and public school personnel with information, guidelines, and a planning framework that addresses the

unique characteristics of individual children and families as well as that of the receiving kindergarten and subsequent primary grade classrooms. Inherent in the model planning process are strategies and activities to build the capacity of schools to plan for and accommodate children with very diverse strengths and needs. Although the TEEM model planning process originated to address the transition from preschool to kindergarten, schools have adapted the TEEM process for transition planning across the grade levels, resulting in increased networking and capacity within local public schools and school districts to address transition challenges and include students.

Transition planning that reflects the TEEM model incorporates the following **best practices:**

1. Family members should receive the necessary information, support, and opportunities to enable them to participate as equal partners in planning their child's transition.

2. Planning the child's transition from an early childhood program to kindergarten and elementary school should occur in a systematic, individualized, timely, and collaborative fashion.

3. The early childhood program staff should provide developmentally appropriate learning opportunities and obtain information about future environments in order to share recommendations with future staff about adaptations, accommodations, resources, etc. that will promote the child's successful transition and inclusion.

4. The elementary school should prepare to successfully include and educate the child in the kindergarten and elementary school.

5. The elementary school staff should provide the necessary services to promote and support the child's placement, inclusion, and education in the kindergarten classroom and elementary school.

The following steps in the TEEM model promote the implementation of the best practices:

a. The ECSE program coordinator identifies children in the ECSE program who will be entering kindergarten the following school year and notifies the principal and appropriate special educator in each of the receiving public schools.

b. The special educator from the receiving school reviews the child's IEP with the ECSE program coordinator and observes the child in her current ECSE setting. The ECSE coordinator and special educator then meet with the child's family and share information about the family's opportunities to participate as equal partners in planning their child's transition. These opportunities include, but are not limited to:

   1) identifying goals for their child's transition, types of information and support they might need, and their desired level of participation in the planning,
   2) receiving assistance in obtaining any information and support they desire, and
   3) being members of their child's Individual Student Planning Team.

c. The principal and receiving special educator identify potential kindergarten classroom placements for individual children.

d. The ECSE program coordinator, receiving special educator/s, and family members (if they choose) observe potential future environments if they are unfamiliar with the settings.

e. The ECSE program coordinator, family, and receiving special educator identify members of an Individual Student Planning Team for the child. The team includes, at a minimum, the family, ECSE program coordinator, receiving special educator and kindergarten teacher. Additional membership on these teams is based upon the individual child's needs. These individuals may include the school principal, child care providers and related service providers.

f. The Individual Student Planning Team meets and develops an individual transition plan for the child. The number of times a team meets after this initial meeting depends upon the individual needs of the child and her family. At initial and subsequent meetings, the Individual Student Planning Team:

   1) establishes collaborative teaming principles and group norms,
   2) identifies the child's strengths, interests, and family's priorities and goals for her learning and development,

3) shares information about the child's current and future settings important to the transition process in order to make recommendations for accommodations and curriculum adaptations,
4) identifies resources, including personnel, instructional materials, and adaptive equipment; training; and technical assistance necessary to successfully include the child in the kindergarten classroom and elementary school,
5) identifies strategies for the family and public school staff to share information once the child is in the kindergarten classroom,
6) identifies strategies for monitoring and evaluating the child's participation in the new setting and for identifying and recruiting new members of the child's Individual Student Planning Team (i.e., first and second grade teachers),
7) identifies strategies for providing the child, family and receiving staff with follow-up support from the early childhood program (e.g., resources, mutually-agreed upon meeting times) once the child is in the kindergarten.
8) develops an individual transition plan which reflects c) through g) and specifies activities, timelines and responsible persons.

g. The special educator, with support from the ECSE Coordinator, is responsible for monitoring implementation of the child's individual transition plan to ensure that specified activities are carried out in a timely manner.

h. If developmentally appropriate, family members and sending staff may incorporate learning opportunities and teaching strategies observed in the future environment(s) into the child's current settings, e.g., home, preschool, kindergarten.

B. Participating Sites

A participating site in this project was defined as the early childhood program providing services for children with special needs and the public schools that children from the program typically would attend. The sites represented urban, suburban and rural settings; were

characterized by racial, ethnic and cultural diversity; and had wide differences in available resources. Participating sites were:

KENTUCKY
Jessamine County Schools, Nicholasville
Mercer County Schools, Harrodsburg

NEVADA
Carson City School District, Carson City
Washoe County School District, Reno

NEW JERSEY
Bloomingdale Public Schools, Bloomingdale, NJ
Middletown Township Public Schools, Middletown, NJ
Collingswood School District, Collingswood
Washington Township Public Schools, Sewell

OHIO
Madeira School District, Madeira

SOUTH CAROLINA
Abbeville County School District, Abbeville
Horry County Schools, Conway
Richland District Two, Columbia

The sites selected for participation committed to, among other things: 1) including children in kindergarten classrooms and subsequent primary grades, 2) nurturing family/school relationships and collaboration, 3) dedicating a primary level special educator to support family members and K-1 educators in implementing the transition process, and 4) forming Individual Student Planning Teams, consisting of at least the child's family, early childhood special educator, kindergarten teacher, and kindergarten/first grade special educator, to participate in the two-day Transition Leadership Institute and follow-up planning.

IV. MAJOR PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS BY OBJECTIVE

A. Establishment of National Advisory Council

The 14 individuals on the project's Advisory Council represented family members, early childhood and elementary general and special educators and administrators, State Education Agencies and Institutions of Higher Education. Four of the Advisory Council members are nationally-recognized experts in the areas of inclusion and/or transition. During the three years of the project, project staff shared information and consulted with Advisory Council members through conference and individual phone calls, electronic mail, the in-state project consultants, direct interactions when project staff were on site, and at conferences mutually attended by some Advisory Council members and project staff. Project staff maintained ongoing consultation and problem-solving with the Vermont-based member of the Advisory Council. Several Advisory Council members helped to facilitate Transition Leadership Institutes and follow-up technical assistance. Two family members from the Advisory Council presented on the topic of Family-School Communication and Collaboration during Transition Leadership Institutes held in South Carolina and Ohio. Several Advisory Council members were instrumental in the recruitment of participating sites for the second and third years of the project.

B. Transition Leadership Institutes and Technical Assistance

1. Transition Leadership Institutes

The purposes of the two-day Transition Leadership Institutes were to: a) build a participating site's capacity to include children with

disabilities in kindergarten and beyond, b) assist the participating sites in designing strategies for continuing to involve families as their children move from early childhood into elementary school settings, c) create collaborative student planning and support teams, and d) operationalize or enhance any existing transition process in the participating site.

Nine Transition Leadership Institutes were held during the three years of the project. Project staff, including the four in-state consultants from Nevada, New Jersey, Ohio and South Carolina, co-facilitated the Institutes. In addition, Brenda Mullins, Coordinator of Kentucky's Early Childhood Transition Project, assisted in facilitating the March 2000 Leadership Institute held in Kentucky. Family members from each participating site's state presented during the Institutes on family-school collaboration and communication.

Thirty-seven Individual Student Planning Teams (including one team that planned for twins), 222 members total, participated across the nine Institutes. Another three Individual Student Planning Teams participated in a follow-up day to one of the Institutes, for a total of **40 planning teams composed of 236 members**.

Institute locations and participating sites were:

YEAR ONE

Columbia, South Carolina
Richland District Two, Columbia

Madeira, Ohio
Madeira School District, Madeira

YEAR TWO

New Brunswick, New Jersey
Bloomingdale Public Schools, Bloomingdale
Middletown Township Public Schools, Middletown

Sewell, New Jersey
Collingswood School District, Collingswood
Washington Township Public Schools, Sewell

Shakertown, Kentucky
Jessamine County Schools, Nicholasville
Mercer County Schools, Harrodsburg

Abbeville, South Carolina
Abbeville County School District, Abbeville

Reno, Nevada
Washoe County School District, Reno

YEAR THREE

Conway, South Carolina
Horry County Schools, Conway

Carson City, NV
Carson City School District, Carson City

The content of the Institutes focused on the TEEM model planning process, inclusion, collaborative teaming and the role and function of the Individual Student Planning Team, family-school communication and collaboration, belonging and friendships, and individual student supports and accommodations. Each of the Individual Student Planning Teams developed a Team and Student MAPS (Making Action Plans) and Student Action Plan, and identified follow-up technical assistance necessary to implement each student's plan. During the Institutes, particular emphasis was placed upon the principles of family-centered services as they relate to ensuring

successful transition and educational experiences for children and their families. The Institutes provided family members with the opportunity to begin to form relationships with educators from the schools their children would attend. Institute evaluations, summarized under "Evaluation of Project Impact," consistently cited this as one of the most positive outcomes.

Curriculum materials developed for the Institutes were revised over the span of the nine Institutes based on participant feedback. Along with notebooks containing the curriculum, the following resources were provided for family members and representatives of the participating early childhood and elementary programs:

Buswell, B.E., Schaffner, C.B., & Seyler, A.B. (1999). Opening doors: Connecting students to curriculum, classmates, and learning.

Giangreco, M.F. (1997). *Quick guides to inclusion: Ideas for educating students with disabilities.*

Giangreco, M.F. (1998). *Quick guides to inclusion 2: Ideas for educating students with disabilities.*

Giangreco, M.F. (1998). *Ants in his pants: Absurdities and realities of special education.*

Giangreco, M.F. (1999). *Flying by the seat of your pants: More absurdities and realities of special education*

Giangreco, M.F. (2000). *Teaching Old Logs New Tricks: More absurdities and realities of special education.*

Little, L. (ed.) (1999). *Early Developments: Promoting continuity in the lives of young children. Kindergarten Transition.*

McGregor, G., & Vogelsberg, R.T. (1998). Inclusive school practices: Pedagogical and research foundations.

National Institute for Urban School Improvement. (1997). *Improving Education: The promise of inclusive schooling.*

Ross-Allen, J., Conn-Powers, M., & Fox, W.L. (1991). *TEEM: A manual to support the transition of young children with special needs and their families from preschool into kindergarten and other regular education environments.*

Schaffner, C.B., & Buswell, B.E. (1992). *Connecting students: A guide to thoughtful friendship facilitation for educators and families.*

Southeast Regional Vision for Education. (1998). *Terrific Transitions: Ensuring continuity of services for children and their families.*

The National Association of State Boards of Education. (1992). Winners all: A call for inclusive schools.

Schaffner, C.B., & Buswell, B.E. (1992). *Connecting students: A guide to thoughtful friendship facilitation for educators and families.*

Southeast Regional Vision for Education. (1998). *Terrific Transitions: Ensuring continuity of services for children and their families.*

2. Technical Assistance to Participating Sites

The four in-state consultants and Vermont project staff provided technical assistance in response to participant-identified needs both prior to and following the Leadership Institutes. Ms. Mullins also provided technical assistance to Jessamine and Mercer County Schools following the Kentucky Institute. The majority of technical assistance activities involved providing additional written materials for participants' colleagues, assisting school districts in developing/refining transition procedures to incorporate some steps in the TEEM process, and assisting participants in identifying ways to tailor the content of the Institute and share with others in their particular programs/school districts. This latter activity occurred during Year One following the two-day Transition Institute for the Madeira, Ohio school district. Based on participant feedback, the in-state consultant for Ohio and Madeira's Special Education Administrator and a district speech-language pathologist planned and conducted a one-day training for three additional planning teams, tailoring the content of the two-day Institute. One team was focused on planning for a child's entrance into

kindergarten and the other two teams planned for the transition of two children leaving fourth grade and entering fifth grade. Having teams that were planning for older students promoted the administration's ultimate goal of generalizing the TEEM process to transitions into elementary school and across grade levels.

The Washoe County School District in Reno, Nevada received technical assistance prior to participating in a Transition Leadership Institute. Washoe County School District administrators and the project's in-state consultant identified the need to engage in some preliminary systems change efforts to increase the number of inclusive preschool/kindergarten options for three, four and five year old children with disabilities and their families. It was felt these efforts were critical in order to significantly increase the number of inclusive settings available for children with disabilities and their families when planning for their transitions into kindergarten in subsequent years.

During Year 1 and the fall of Year 2, project staff provided ongoing technical assistance to a 50-member district/community-wide task force. Technical assistance activities included planning and facilitating an initial two-day meeting of the task force and identifying individuals to share information about legal requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and best practices in early childhood/early childhood special education. Task force members subsequently self-selected into three sub-committees - Child Find, Preschool Services, Kindergarten - and generated strategies and recommendations for making changes to the service delivery system. The Task Force

reconvened as a large group at the beginning of Year 2 of the project and finalized its recommendations to the Washoe County Administration and Board of Trustees. The Transition Leadership Institute was held upon completion of the task force's work.

C. Dissemination of Project Components

Project staff and the in-state consultants disseminated information about the project and its components to a variety of audiences and in different formats throughout the project period. An internet web site (http://www.uvm.edu/~uapvt/programs/teem/) was established, maintained, and updated by project staff. During the first year, a project brochure was developed. **Over 1000 brochures** were distributed through mailings nationwide, at the Transition Leadership Institutes, and at national meetings (e.g., Part C/Part B 619 and Project Directors' meetings) and conferences.

Project information and recruitment materials were mailed to parent training organizations within each participating site's state (Nevada, New Jersey, Ohio, and South Carolina). Project staff also posted project-related information on the Part C, Part B 619 and early childhood listservs maintained by staff at the National Early Childhood Technical Assistance System (NECTAS). As a result of these dissemination/recruitment efforts, 33 sites across 12 states responded in the spring of Year 1.

The in-state consultants actively recruited participating sites during Years 1 and 2. The New Jersey consultant conducted three workshops during Year One for several districts in the southern and

central regions of New Jersey. Over 100 people attended and were introduced to the TEEM model planning process and the "Transition Activities Booklet." This booklet was developed by representatives of several districts which had participated as sites in National TEEM Outreach projects (1992-1998) at the request and with the support of the New Jersey State Department of Education. The booklet contains recommended and suggested activities that these districts identified as working most effectively in transition planning for children, their families and the early childhood/elementary school staff. As a result of these workshops, 12 New Jersey school districts expressed interest in participating in the project; four of these districts ultimately participated in the project.

In addition to disseminating the project's brochure and specific recruitment materials, **over 600** of the project's manual, *"TEEM: A Manual to Support the Transition of Young Children with Special Needs and Their Families from Preschool into Kindergarten and Other Regular Education Environments"* and the project's family brochure *entitled "Your Child's Entry into Elementary School: What Can You Do?"* were distributed at the Transition Leadership Institutes, in response to specific requests, and at various conferences that project staff attended and presented at.

Articles about the project and its components appeared in Vermont's "I-Team News," which reaches approximately 3,000 family members, educators, administrators, higher education personnel, and other individuals in Vermont and nationwide, and in the Madeira, Ohio

School District's City newsletter entitled "District Digest." An article also appeared in the spring 1999 issue of the newsletter "Thought into Action" published by the College of Education and Social Services at The University of Vermont. Following the Transition Leadership Institute in Sewell, New Jersey in January 2000, the Gloucester County Times in Gloucester County, New Jersey published an article about the Transition Leadership Institute at the request of a parent participating in the Institute. The article highlighted the content and activities of the two-day Institute and the parent's perspective on his role as a member of his son's planning team.

Major project presentations included the following:

Along Life's Highways. A Conference About Transition Strategies & Supports for Children and Youth, St. Johnsbury, VT, October, 1998.

Planning for Transitions: Promoting Quality Supports and Continuity for All Young Children and Their Families, University of Cincinnati Preschool Practicum, February 1999.

Planning for Transitions: Promoting Quality Supports and Continuity for All Young Children and Their Families. BEST Summer Institute, Killington, VT, June 1999.

TEEM: Supporting the Transition of Children with Special Needs from Preschool to Kindergarten. Connecticut Down Syndrome Congress 14th Annual Convention, Norwalk, CT, October, 1999.

Including All Young Children in Kindergarten through Collaborative Transition Planning. International TASH Conference, Chicago, IL, December, 1999.

Including All Young Children in Kindergarten through Collaborative Transition Planning. Fifteenth Annual International Early Childhood Conference on Children with Special Needs, Washington, DC, December, 1999.

Are We Transitioning Again? The Journey Continues as Children Transition to Kindergarten. OSEP and NECTAS National Meeting, Washington, DC, January 2000.

Family-Centered Practice in the Transition Process: Creating Transition Teams. American Speech-Language-Hearing Association Conference, Washington, DC, November 2000.

Promoting Continuity and Inclusion for All Young Children and Their Families. International TASH Conference, Miami, FL, December 2000.

Planning for Transitions: Promoting Quality Supports and Continuity for All Young Children and Their Families, OSEP and NECTAS National Meeting, Washington, DC, February 2001.

Transition Planning in Early Intervention/Early Childhood. Valdosta State University, Valdosta, GA, May 2001.

Based on dissemination efforts, project staff provided additional technical assistance related to transition planning and inclusion throughout the project. Project staff provided technical assistance to a school planning team in **Fairfax County, Virginia**, primarily through a family member who contacted project staff during Year 2 for assistance in planning for her child to enter his home school kindergarten. Project staff provided technical assistance through electronic mail and over the telephone and sent project materials to support the planning team's efforts.

During the fall of Year 3, project staff facilitated a one-day focus forum/training on early childhood transition and the TEEM process for 34 family members and early childhood and elementary school administrators and staff from the **Sycamore Schools in Cincinnati, Ohio** and a one-day session on transition and the TEEM process for 30 participants in **Phoenix, Arizona**.

The project's coordinator was a member of **Vermont's** Transition Steering Committee and co-facilitator of the Transition to School sub-committee during the project period. The Steering Committee has a three-year action plan (July 1999-July 2002) to enhance continuity for

infants, toddlers and young children with disabilities and their families at two critical transition points: from early intervention to preschool services and from early childhood settings into kindergarten. Based on work done by the Steering Committee and input from members of the two working sub-committees (the other being Transition at Age Three), a set of 18 Guiding Concepts around transition were developed and adopted in April 2000. The booklet "Off to Kindergarten," developed by the Transition to School sub-committee, was published in February 2000 and addresses planning for all young children and their families. Sixteen thousand copies have been distributed statewide to early childhood settings to maximize the possibility that they will be given to families with four-year old children entering kindergarten in fall 2001. The Steering Committee and two sub-committees convened as a large group in April and October 2000 to review progress on the three-year plan and make necessary revisions. A "Transition Summit" was held in March 2001 to problem solve challenges related to ongoing, systematic implementation of transition planning and to review/revise goals and activities for the remaining year and a half of the action plan.

An article co-authored by the project's Ohio in-state consultant and Vermont coordinator entitled "The Transition Process in the Early Years: Enhancing SLPs' Perspectives" was accepted for publication in the journal Language, Speech and Hearing Services in Schools. The article focuses on the role of speech language pathologists as members of collaborative transition planning teams and on best practices in transition planning.

D. Evaluation of Project Impact

1. Transition Leadership Institutes

Participants completed a questionnaire at the end of each Institute evaluating the usefulness and organization of content and providing open-ended feedback. Data below are based on 180 responses.

a. Usefulness/Organization

1 = not at all useful/organized, 5 = very useful/organized

Materials/Presentations/Activities	Usefulness	Organization
Institute Book Bag Resources	4.8	4.9
Institute Notebooks	4.9	5.0
Naming Your Team (Activity)	4.4	4.8
Collaborative Teaming (Presentation)	4.8	4.8
Developing Team Norms (Activity)	4.7	4.9
MAPS Overview/Video	4.6	4.8
Developing Student MAPS	5.0	5.0
Team MAPS	5.0	5.0
Overview TEEM Process (Presentation)	4.6	4.6
Belonging & Friendships (Presentation)	4.7	4.8
Student Supports for Belonging & Friendships (Activity)	4.9	4.9
Family/School Collaboration (Presentation/Activity)	4.8	4.8
Inclusion/Student Supports & Accommodations (Presentation/Activity)	4.8	4.8
Activity Matrix (Presentation/Activity)	4.3	4.4
Student Action Plan	4.3	4.5
Team Support Plan	4.5	4.6
Overall Rating of Institute	5.0	4.9

b. Open-Ended Responses

Feedback from open-ended responses was extremely positive. Participants across all nine Institutes overwhelmingly and consistently cited collaborative teaming, involvement of family members on their child's planning team and as presenters at the Institute, and their experience in doing a MAPS (Making Action Plans) around their particular student as

three of the most significant outcomes of the Institute. Other benefits/good ideas participants cited included:

*having pictures of students at the Institute
*sharing roles as part of collaboration
*having diverse points of view and promoting the notion that "all voices count"
*the concept of building supports around a person, not making a person fit into available supports/resources
*parents and teachers getting to know each other prior to child making the transition, i.e., relationship-building
*making plans ahead
*Getting a thorough picture of the child from both school and home perspectives and "making me more aware of parent concerns and thoughts"
*completing a Positive Student Profile
*the potential of the planning processes and tools to be applied to transitions for children of different ages across a variety of settings
*use of notebook materials for many students
*the potential positive impact of applying these practices to enhance the Individual Education Plan planning process

Participants made the following suggestions for improving the Institutes:

* "it would have been better if more auxiliary personnel attended"
* "the paperwork seemed unrealistic for each child"
*numbering pages in the notebooks
*extending the Institute to more than two days

Other comments included:

*"Wouldn't this be great for all of the students (Regular and Special Education)?"
*"I especially felt that our experiences with coming against system realities was never minimized. It simply wasn't given the opportunity to take over the presentation and sap its energy and that seemed right to me."
*"I'm new with the district. My role as school nurse was greatly enhanced as to the fact that I learned a great deal about the needs of special students and their parents, plus was able to see how wonderful and concerned the teachers, speech therapists, psychologists and counselors were to their needs and eager to learn more new ways of meeting the special needs of these students."
*"This was one of the most interesting and beneficial workshops I have ever attended (20 years with public education)."
*"The notebook contained relevant, pertinent information, although much of it is common sense."

Participants also commented on their desire to not only have more time to do the MAPS process around each child with special

needs making a transition into public schools, but also to do it with all entering kindergartners and students with special needs making transitions at the upper elementary school level.

One kindergarten teacher summarized the impact of the Institute as follows:

> "I found all the ideas important and influential. The highest compliment I can pay is that this entire Institute could have easily been separated from "special ed" and inclusion. These ideas are the basis of good teaching – period."

As one parent noted, "the best idea (from the Institute) was that as a parent, I was there."

Data from the Institutes supported the goal of building the capacity of schools and districts to continue planning for children with different needs as they progress throughout the school system and to enhancing family-school collaboration.

2. Dissemination

Project staff developed and maintained a database for recording the distribution of and responses to dissemination materials related to site recruitment and general information sharing. As a result of specific dissemination efforts related to recruitment of participating sites, 33 sites across 12 states requested additional information and application materials in the spring of Year 1. Responses to Year 1 recruitment efforts indicated strong interest in the TEEM process and satisfaction with the readability, usefulness and completeness of the materials disseminated.

3. Children, Their Families, Educators and Schools

The participation of Individual Student Planning Teams from sites in the nine Transition Leadership Institutes and follow-up training in the Madeira, Ohio school district resulted in the transition of 39 children from preschool settings into kindergarten and two children from fifth grade into inclusive settings, for a total of **41 children**. Subsequent to their participation in the Institutes, participating sites planned for an **additional 300 students** to enter inclusive settings.

A family member emailed project staff following one of the New Jersey Institutes and said that *"I hadn't realized the whole issue of transition could be so complicated and detailed (maybe because ___is not severely disabled), and I truly appreciate the chance to break down and delineate the tasks and processes involved in setting ____ up for success at this stage of his life. I think both my husband and I and the rest of the Child Study Team have a host of new tools to use in making this as good an experience for ___ (and his kindergarten teacher) as it can be."*

A special educator wrote in a letter that *"as a case manager for preschool children I have already incorporated some of the information gathered in writing an IEP for the student we discussed at the Institute. I expect to use the excellent materials, suggestions and forms provided during the Institute and in our packets for all of our preschool children."*

As a result of the Madeira, Ohio School District's participation in this project, the district is devoting one day to transition planning annually for all children entering public school. The Madeira School District preschool director wants to adapt the TEEM planning process for all children making

a transition from the county preschools to the local preschool to smooth their transition as well as to train her preschool staff in the process. The Madeira School District ultimately is planning to generalize the TEEM process to transitions across grade levels and, as discussed previously, began that process for two students entering fifth grade during a one-day training following the Transition Leadership Institute.

Following their participation in a Transition Leadership Institute last winter, the Horry County Schools started developing a transition handbook for families that they hope to complete and begin disseminating this school year. The summer following their district's participation in a Transition Leadership Institute during Year 2, two administrators drafted district transition policies and procedures based on those developed by other school districts that had participated in previous National TEEM Outreach projects. One Institute participant, highlighting the powerful impact of her district's participation in the Institute, noted that the planning tools and processes learned at the Institute, particularly the collaboration and communication strategies, were instrumental in avoiding mediation, and possibly a due process hearing, with one student's family.

4. Additional Impact

New Jersey is incorporating the TEEM transition planning process and its components into its State Improvement Grant activities. Nevada's application for a State Improvement Grant also incorporated the TEEM process to assist in addressing Nevada's focus on lifespan transition planning.

V. LOGISTICAL CHALLENGES

The only logistical challenges were those cited by participants related to the Transition Leadership Institutes. Individual Student Planning Team members would like to have had the opportunity to observe the child for whom they were planning prior to coming to the Institute. Team members potentially unfamiliar with future settings, e.g., the child's family and preschool staff, also would have liked to visit the setting into which the child was going. Several participants mentioned that although the project could provide families with reimbursement for child care, at least two family members were unable to be at the Institute for both days due to the unavailability of child care. Related to this, some participants felt they needed more than a two-day Institute, but that it was unrealistic to expect family members and school personnel to take three full days away from their other responsibilities.

VI. FUTURE ACTIVITIES

The Center on Disability and Community Inclusion (CDCI) maintains a web site (http://www.uvm.edu/~uapvt/) that includes information on available resources. The TEEM manual and family brochures will continue to be made available through the CDCI. The web site of the Early Childhood Research Institute on Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) Services at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign (http://ericps.crc.uiuc.edu/clas) lists the TEEM manual as a resource and provides information on obtaining it in the written description.

VII. ASSURANCES

A full copy of this final report is being sent to the ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education at the Council for Exceptional Children in Reston, Virginia. One copy of the title page and project overview is being sent to the National Early Childhood Technical Assistance System (NECTAS) in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.